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## Governor Signs Housing and Conservation Planning Program into Law

CONCORD, NH - Surrounded by supporters at a ceremony at the NH State House today, Governor Lynch signed SB 217 into law, creating the Housing and Conservation Planning Program. This new program, housed at the Office of Energy and Planning (OEP), provides grants that address both local housing and conservation needs in communities.

"The creation of the Housing and Conservation Planning Program will provide valuable financial and technical resources to municipalities to help them develop plans to make their communities better places to live," said OEP Director Amy Ignatius.

Managing growth at the municipal level has created conflicting pressures for local leaders: protecting the area's natural resources and character, while meeting the housing needs of current and future residents.



In an unprecedented collaboration of divergent interests, the Growth and Development Roundtable was convened by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and met steadily for two years to develop and support passage of this legislation. As a broad coalition of business, conservation, housing, municipal, and planning interests, the Roundtable advocated for this incentive-based program to give communities the ability to plan for housing and conservation through a unified planning strategy.

"The grants from the program will help municipalities plan for local workforce housing while conserving natural resources and preserving historic structures," said Senator Martha Fuller Clark, a key proponent of the bill. "As young professionals, firefighters, teachers, and health care workers make longer commutes from outside of town to find suitable housing, we lose them as part of our community fabric. Existing development patterns are also threatening natural and historic resources. Now is the time to address these issues."

The unrelenting pressures of growth on communities make it very hard for local leaders to protect a community's natural resources and character, while meeting the needs for housing.

"This Roundtable found immediate common ground in the belief that our state cannot sustain its

growth rate and maintain its character by doing more of what worked in the past," said Lew Feldstein, president of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation.

Municipalities are encouraged to apply for this voluntary program. More information on the new Housing and Conservation Planning Program is available at [www.nh.gov/oep/programs/HCPP](http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/HCPP).

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